

Appl. No. 10/823,709
Amendment dated July 14, 2008
Reply to Office Action of March 31, 2008

REMARKS

In the March 31, 2008 Office Action, the claims 1, 10, 11, 17, 19, and 21 were objected to and claims 1-5, 10-13, and 17-30 stand rejected in view of prior art. Claims 10, 11, 17, 20, 21, and 27 also were rejected for failing to indicate and to claim particularly and distinctly the subject matter that Applicant regards as the invention. In the March 31, 2008 Office Action, all of the claims stand rejected in view of prior art. No other objections or rejections were made in the Office Action.

Status of Claims and Amendments

In response to the March 31, 2008 Office Action, Applicant has amended claims 1, 10, 12, 17, and 27 and has canceled claims 19 and 20 as indicated above. Further, Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection of claim 20 and has amended claim 1 to recite the limitations of claim 20, and has added claims 31-33. Thus, claims 1-6, 10-13, 17-18, and 21-33 are pending, with claims 1 and 17 being the only independent claims. Reexamination and reconsideration of the pending claims are respectfully requested in view of above amendments and the following comments.

Interview Summary

On June 24, 2008, the undersigned conducted a telephonic interview with Examiner Johnson, who is in charge of the above-identified patent application. Applicant wishes to thank Examiner Johnson for the opportunity to discuss the above-identified patent application during the Interview of June 24, 2008.

Claim Objections

In item 2 of the Office Action, claims 1 and 17 were objected to for awkward language. In item 3, claims 10, 11, and 21 were objected to for depending on canceled claim 9. Further, claim 19 was objected to for being of improper dependent form for failing to limit

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further the subject matter of a previous claim. In response, Applicant has amended claims 1 and 17 as suggested, amended claim 10 to depend upon claim 1, and has canceled claim 19 rendering the objection moot.

Applicant believes that the claims are now correct. Withdrawal of the objections is respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. §112

In item 6 of the Office Action, claims 10, 11, 17, 20, 21, and 27 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. In response, Applicant has amended claims 1, 10, 17, and 27 and has canceled claim 20 as indicated above.

Specifically, Applicant has amended claims 10 and 17 to recite -- an inertia member -- to provide antecedent basis, and has amended claim 27 to recite -- said inertia member -- to clarify it. Claim 1 now recites the limitations of claim 20, and has been rewritten so that it is clear that Applicant is referring to one crankshaft protrusion.

Applicant believes that the claims now comply with 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. Withdrawal of the rejections is respectfully requested.

Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103

In item 8 of the Office Action, claims 1-5, 10-13, 20, 21, 23, and 24 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,213,270 (Jäckel et al.) in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,842,116 (Fukushima). In item 9 of the Office Action, claims 1 23, and 24 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Jäckel et al. in view of Fukushima. In item 10 of the Office Action, claims 17-19, 22, and 25-30 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Jäckel et al. in view of Fukushima, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,732,250 (Maucher et al.). In response,

Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection of claim 20, has amended claim 1 to recite the limitations of claim 20, has canceled claim 20, and has amended similarly claim 17.

More specifically, original claim 20 recited and independent claim 1 now recites that the crankshaft has an annular protrusion that has an outer circumferential surface that supports an inner circumferential surface of the support member. On page 6 of the Office Action, it is stated, and Applicant agrees, that Jäckel et al. do not disclose the crankshaft with an annular protrusion as claimed. Thus, the Office Action relies on Fukushima, specifically in Figure 1 the portion of the crankshaft that supports the inner circumferential surface of the support member 37a.

Applicant respectfully asserts that the broadest definition of annular is having the form a ring. Applicant respectfully asserts that for something to have the form of a ring that something must have an empty interior. Applicant respectfully asserts that the crankshaft of Figure 1 of Fukushima fails to disclose or to suggest an annular protrusion as recited in original claim 20 or amended claim 1 of the present application. Moreover, Applicant respectfully asserts that Fukushima fails to disclose or to suggest a crankshaft that has an annular protrusion that has an outer circumferential surface that supports an inner circumferential surface of the support member.

Applicant respectfully asserts that Maucher et al. were cited to show an input member having an inner circumferential surface that contacts an outer circumferential surface of a support portion of a support member, and also fails to disclose or to suggest a crankshaft that has an annular protrusion that has an outer circumferential surface that supports an inner circumferential surface of the support member.

Thus, since none of the prior art references discloses or suggests this feature, Applicant respectfully asserts that the combination also fails to disclose or to suggest this

feature. It is well settled in U.S. patent law that the mere fact that the prior art can be modified does not make the modification obvious, unless the prior art suggests the desirability of the modification. Accordingly, the prior art of record lacks any suggestion or expectation of success for combining the patents to create the Applicant's unique arrangement.

Claim 17 has been similarly amended. Thus, Applicant respectfully asserts that claim 17 is allowable for the aforementioned reasons.

Moreover, Applicant believes that the dependent claims are also allowable over the prior art of record in that they depend from independent claims 1 and 17, and therefore are allowable for the reasons stated above. Also, the dependent claims are further allowable because they include additional limitations. Thus, Applicant believes that since the prior art of record does not disclose or suggest the invention as set forth in independent claims 1 and 17, the prior art of record also fails to disclose or suggest the inventions as set forth in the dependent claims.

Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests that this rejection be withdrawn in view of the above comments and amendments.

New Claims 31-33

Applicants have added new claims 31, 32, and 33 by the current Amendment. These claims ultimately depend on claims 1 and 17, which Applicant believes are allowable for the reasons mentioned above. Applicant believes that these claims are further allowable because they contain additional limitations.

Prior Art Citation

In the Office Action, additional prior art references were made of record. Applicant believes that these references do not render the claimed invention obvious.

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In view of the foregoing amendment and comments, Applicant respectfully asserts that claims 1-6, 10-13, 17-18, and 21-33 are now in condition for allowance. Reexamination and reconsideration of the pending claims are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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